

**James Madison to George Mason, July 14, 1826.
Transcription: The Writings of James Madison,
ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons,
1900-1910.**

TO GEORGE MASON.1

1 Copy of the original in the Virginia Historical Society. The enclosure was a copy of the Memorial and Remonstrance against religious assessments. See *ante*, Vol. II., p. 183.

Montpellier, July 14, 1826.

I have received, Sir, your letter of the 6th. inst. requesting such information as I may be able to give as to the origin of the document, a copy of which was inclosed in it. The motive and manner of the request would entitle it to respect if less easily complied with than by the following statement.

During the session of the General Assembly 1784–5 a bill was introduced into the House of Delegates providing for the legal support of Teachers of the Christian Religion, and being patronized by the most popular talents in the House, seemed likely to obtain a majority of votes. In order to arrest its progress it was insisted with success that the bill should be postponed till the evening session, and in the meantime be printed for public consideration. That the sense of the people might be the better called forth, your highly distinguished ancestor Col. Geo. Mason, Col. Geo. Nicholas also possessing much public weight and some others thought it advisable that a remonstrance against the bill should be prepared for general circulation and signature and imposed on me the task of drawing up such a paper. The draught having received their sanction, a large number of printed copies

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were distributed, and so extensively signed by the people of every religious denomination that at the ensuing session the projected measure was entirely frustrated; and under the influence of the public sentiment thus manifested the celebrated bill "Establishing Religious Freedom" enacted into a permanent barrier against Future attempts on the rights of conscience as declared in the Great Charter prefixed to the Constitution of the State. Be pleased to accept my friendly respects.